

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Stephen Ashurst, Marty Baker, Laura Beck, Lisa Beck, Eric Beckett, Stacey Beckett, Samantha Biddle, Christy Bernal, Eric Brenner, Aviva Brown, Tony Campbell, Liz Cornish, Robert Gaston, Nathan George, Charles Glass, Luis Gonzalez, Roy Gothie, Peter Gray, John Hartline, Heather Erstz, Carol Kachadoorian, Bruce Kinzinger, Jon Korin, Jon Morrison, Kevin Racine, Gregory Slater, Steve Thomas, James Titus, John Wetmore, Kayla Zalcgendles

I. Welcome/Introductions

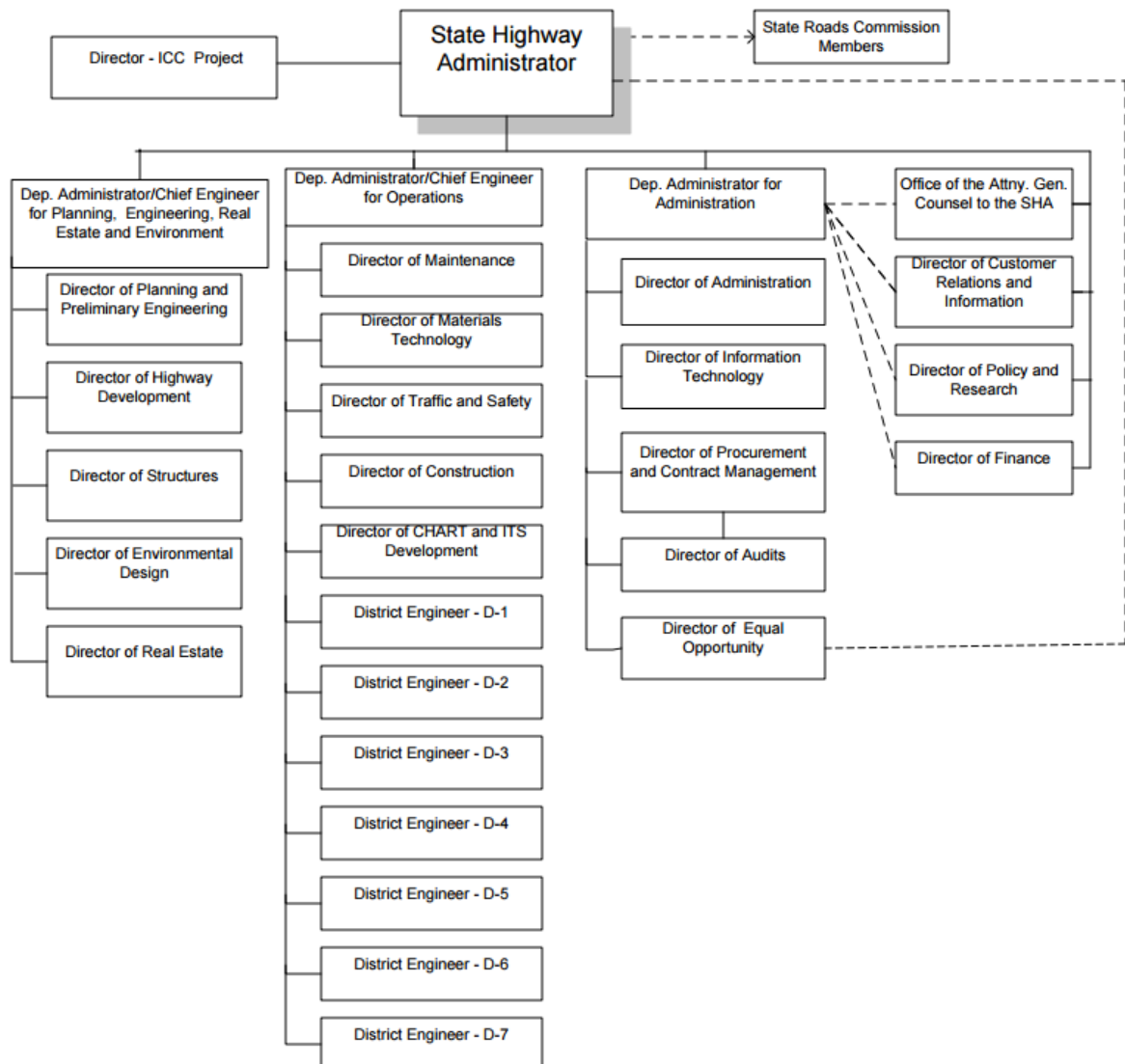
Eric Brenner, Chair of MBPAC, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

II. January Meeting Minutes Approved

III. MDOT – SHA Report

A. SHA Overview

Gregory Slater, State Highway Administration (SHA) Administrator, provided an overview of the structure of SHA. SHA has about 3,000 employees and regulates all numbered routes in the State, including 65-75% of the state's traffic. See organizational chart below.



Greg answered several questions raised during the meeting.

- *How can we make it easier for the bike community and SHA to work together?*

Greg talked about the need to build better partnerships and create open dialogue between the State, county, and local governments and the bike community. He said that SHA's primary goal was to provide safe transportation for Marylanders. He explained that when the state highways designed decades ago, they were not intended for multi-modal use. Conflicts exist today in emerging urban areas, where major arterials pass through newly-dense areas. Also, with new smart phone technology, drivers are being routed to roads that were not designed for through traffic. Furthermore, our highways were not designed to carry the amount of freight that they handle today.

- *We would like to give SHA credit for the things they're doing, how can we get more data about miles of bike lanes, what projects are under construction, planned and proposed? In addition, people are interested in real-time information, not just plan updates.*

Greg explained that some counties have taken the lead on comprehensive bicycle network planning, and that SHA incorporates that information into their systems to assist with statewide planning. He also discussed how there is a new Transportation Policy Group in AASHTO (replacing the Standing Committee for Highways), made up of chief engineers from six participating states, and it includes a new committee on active transportation.

- *Is SHA using new applications to track bicycle count/mileage data?*

Greg explained that SHA has struggled with having good bicycle count data. Google and Waze use probe based data to track vehicle speed and density. Count data is more useful for bike counts. SHA has an outreach program to start collecting data because of the growing need to understand where cyclists are going.

- *Does SHA hear from Pedestrian Advocacy groups? If so, how?*

Greg responded that the feedback they get from pedestrian groups is not as organized as bicyclists groups and the incidents are more isolated. He said that he tends to hear from them in conversations around specific municipal/urban areas or metro stations.

- *Is it possible to recover shoulders that had been converted to through lanes of traffic, because often these are the only routes between two trails?*

Greg explained that SHA does not have a plan to bring back what was destroyed during the previous generation's expansion of the highway system. He explained that as with environmental issues, it is very difficult to "fix" things that were done before. He explained that with things like the bicycle retrofit programs, SHA is trying to focus on connecting gaps. In addition, there are sometimes opportunities in the resurfacing program, or system preservation programs. If there is sufficient ROW, SHA has tightened some travel lanes to provide more of a shoulder, or provided small trail connections.

- *Is it possible, like in Colorado, where the obesity rate is the lowest in the country, to stipulate that 2.5% of SHA's budget go towards bicycling infrastructure?*

Greg mentioned that if SHA does a resurfacing project and a bike lane is added to a road, that it would not appear in the budget. He explained that Maryland has a pooled fund, as opposed to separating funding by modes.

- *How are bicycle facilities and accommodations incorporated into SHA's resurfacing program?*

Greg said that they look at the County priority letters and the bike plans that they receive. The representative from Hagerstown explained that they send their plans to everyone at SHA, follow up, and build relationships with their SHA contacts. They receive a list of resurfacing projects from their district office, and remind their SHA contacts about bike facility opportunities every summer as SHA prepares its resurfacing plans.

- *How can bike advocates build relationships when certain representatives are not concerned or knowledgeable about bicycle transportation?*

Greg said that if you are talking to a District Engineer, tell them about the problem first and ask them for their advice about how to solve it. Problems and adversarial relationships are created when people come to the Districts with a solution already formed, and try to impose their vision on everyone else.

- *Can you share any advice about how to speed up the very cumbersome and slow moving process to implement additional bike trails and lanes?*

Greg explained that some counties and municipalities got frustrated with the federal process, and that MDOT's grantmaking problems are designed to fill those gaps, but we see that a lot of local governments are struggling to implement projects. Some local departments are more effective in construction projects, but those departments might not oversee developing a bicycle or pedestrian project. The Anne Arundel County representative said that they had to do a lot of work with the County to move on the design work for the Patapsco River Bridge County.

- *How can MBPAC engage more with SHA?*

Greg said that he would like this to develop as a strong partnership and work together on specific projects. We also need your help in working with local governments, providing advice and developing partnerships. Also, Greg explained that sometimes SHA can deliver a limited bikeways project, like providing a shoulder or sharrows, rather than the desired bikeways project, like a cycletrack, due to numerous challenges.

B. Regional and Intermodal Planning Division (see PowerPoint presentations)

a. Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Areas (BPPA)

- i. Aviva Brown explained that these were good opportunities to incorporate bike/ped projects into system preservation work. She also mentioned that they are meant for highly urbanized areas. In addition, there is no cap for the number of grants, but more competitive applications are prioritized.

- C. Pedestrian Roadway Safety Audits (PRSA)
 - a. SHA is working on a task to evaluate and streamline the PRSA program. There was some discussion about the overlap between BPPAs and PRSAs, Samantha Biddle explained that the focus and the structure are different: BPPAs are a planning effort, PRSA's focus on implementation.
- D. Grant Programs – Transportation Alternatives, Safe Routes to School, Recreational Trails, Scenic Byways
 - a. Christy Bernal presented grant program information on the Transportation Alternatives (TA) and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs.
 - b. Samantha Biddle presented information about the Recreational Trails Program.
- E. Office of Communications
 - a. Lisa presented on SHA's safety campaign titled "A Bicyclist Could Be Someone You Know".
- F. Office of Highway Design
 - a. Luis Gonzales presented on SHA bicycle and pedestrian funding programs.
- G. Office of Traffic and Safety
 - a. Stacey Beckett discussed approval processes for green paint pavement markings.
- H. Presentation of the Maryland Bike Spine Network
 - a. Tony Campbell explained that the purpose of the map is for both navigation and planning. SHA is working towards regional maps instead of one statewide map. He asked members to provide a list of what layers they would like to add to a digital map and who the data owners are for those layers as part of their comments on the spine network. Printed regional maps will be made available.
 - b. Dorchester provided the Eagleman and Ironman routes, SHA would eventually like other jurisdictions to add their local routes. Department of Natural Resources has trail layers that can be incorporated. Baltimore Metropolitan Council and Washington Council of Governments are also working on layers. The target users are for experienced cyclists, not for families or children for the on-road portions of the spine network.

IV. Legislative Updates

- A. Marty Baker, The Secretary's Office, Office of Planning and Capital Programming
 - a. SB0307 – Passed. Project based scoring system. MDOT is required to develop an experimental model. Work group will be established by the Department of Legislative Services to evaluate the scoring system and provide recommendations by January 2018.
 - b. HB192 – Passed. Task Force to Study Bicycle Safety on Maryland Highways. Mandates that a 20-member task force be created to examine a wide range of

issues concerning bicycle accommodation on highways. The taskforce is required to report by December 2017.

- c. SB 0337 (HB 0527) – Did not pass. However, as announced in their press release of 3/28, MDOT has taken steps to incorporate new pedestrian hybrid signals into the MD Manual on Uniform Traffic Devices and to place enhanced signals on Veirs Mills Road and MD 28 at Leisure World.
- d. SB0925 (HB 0997) – Passed. Provides that bicycles and play vehicles are subject to the same protections and restrictions as pedestrians when lawfully operated on sidewalks or in crosswalks.
- e. SB 0337 (HB 0527) – Did not pass. Would have required that a vehicle driver stop when a pedestrian or bicycle is stopped on a curb or median waiting to cross. MDOT had raised concerns about confusion and safety related to interpreting intents to cross, etc.
- f. HB1079 – Did not pass. Bill authorizes local jurisdictions to regulate the crossing by pedestrians of roadways between adjacent intersections.
- g. HB1456 – Passed. Allows cars to legally pass on the right when overtaking a vehicle making a left turn. Committee members raised concern that adequate safety provision may not have been included. The bill states, however that passing on the right is admissible “only if it is safe to do so” and only if they can do so without leaving the paved surface.
- h. HB0011: Passed. Prohibits intentional diesel emission discharges onto another person or vehicle.

B. Upcoming Events/Meetings

- a. Eric Brenner/Oluseyi Olugbenle, Transportation Planner, MBPAC Staff
 - i. 5/6/2017: Six Pillar Century ride, at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, organized by Character Counts Mid-Shore, Inc.
 - ii. 6/11/2017: Ironman 70.3 Eagleman in Cambridge.
 - iii. 6/23/2017: Informal meeting and biking event in Dorchester (mix of tourism and bicycle representatives, discussing Biking and Walking in the Eastern Shore).
 - iv. 9/8/2017: There will be an informal meeting at the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA).
 - v. 9/2017: Ride for Clean Rivers (formerly Tour de Talbot).
 - vi. 10/7/2017: Ironman Maryland in Cambridge.
 - vii. 10/20/17: Full-day bicycle and pedestrian roundtable with lead advocates and local jurisdictions, in Annapolis. This will be a good networking opportunity.
 - viii. **Next Quarterly Meeting:** July 14, 2017; Host TBU – Maryland Transit Administration and Maryland Transportation Authority, 6 St. Paul St., 9th Floor Conference Room, Baltimore, MD 21202